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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that initiatives to promote community colleges in Latin America should be linked with assessments of Latin American higher education overall. What are the higher education norms and practices that have largely excluded such colleges? And what changing reality opens doors for them? This paper highlights the concept of differentiation, and it explores the institutional and functional differences that have emerged and those that have been stifled in Latin American higher education. Community colleges would represent a radical but logical extension of differentiation. This paper: (1) sketches a general overview of the performance of Latin American higher education; (2) analyzes differentiation by indicating how differentiation is crucial to positive and negative performance and how public policy has often hindered appropriate differentiation; (3) applies the analysis of differentiation to two-year institutions; and (4) explores how changes in Latin American higher education and its environment create conditions conducive to community college development. The paper contends that, in general, the state and public schools in the Latin American higher educational system offer less differentiation than what is needed and that the growing participation of business in concert with government for purposes of community college development is a positive influence. (NB)

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# FRAMING THE PROBLEM: HOW A CHANGING LATIN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION OPENS THE DOOR FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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# Framing the Problem:
# How a Changing Latin American Higher Education Opens the Door for Community Colleges

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## COMMUNITY COLLEGES: WHY AND HOW?

Initiatives to promote community colleges in Latin America should be linked to assessments about Latin American higher education overall. What are the higher education norms and practices that have largely excluded such colleges? And what changing reality opens the door for them?

This paper highlights the concept of differentiation. It explores the institutional and functional differences that have emerged and those that have been stifled in Latin American higher education.

*Community colleges would represent a radical but logical extension of differentiation.* That is the substantive theme of this paper. A normative dimension enters in that this extension would help address a range of problems plaguing Latin American higher education, enhancing reform trends already underway. The growth of community colleges is indeed relevant to virtually all the major policy issues in Latin American higher education: finance, quality, access, equity, accountability, the role of the State, the role of the market, links to economic and national development, internationalization, and the introduction of new technologies.[2]

Community colleges are therefore important to a field whose overall importance is manifest. Enrollments in Latin American higher education are fast moving toward ten million, with more than one in five of the traditional age cohort included and with prospects for increases beyond that cohort. Roughly one-fifth of education budgets and 3 percent of total national budgets go to higher education. And the overall importance of sound higher education systems for economic, social, and political development is increasingly recognized in leading international circles, as reflected in recent documents like *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise.*[3]

This paper does the following:

1. Sketches a general overview of the performance of Latin American higher education.

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[1] The author thanks Professor Cornelius Robbins, former president of the two-year college in Cobbleskill, NY for his comments on an earlier draft.

[2] Especially because the idea of community colleges for Latin America borrows greatly from U.S. models (though models from other nations as well), it is important to highlight how community colleges could be innovations that make sense for much that is changing or attempted both within Latin America's own higher education systems and in their political-economic context.

[3] Document by the Task Force on Higher Education and Society. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000.

2. Analyzes differentiation. The paper indicates how differentiation is crucial to positive and negative performance to date and how public policy has too often hindered appropriate differentiation.

3. Applies the analysis of differentiation to two-year institutions.[4] The paper considers limited data, historical precedent, and obstacles to date.

4. Explores how changes in Latin American higher education and its environment create conditions conducive to community college development. The paper also suggests that such development could help the region tackle major problems in its higher education systems.

## HIGHER EDUCATION PERFORMANCE

Although the assignment for this paper was to "frame the problem," it is important to interpret "the problem" as the challenge of how community colleges might fit into a changing picture of Latin American higher education. We should not fall into the common error of portraying Latin American higher education as simply a problem. It is of course loaded with problems, but it is also loaded with accomplishments; a sketch of the reality to date of Latin American higher education must note both sides.[5]

We must not frame a context in which all has been rotten, in which all has failed but somehow, some way, community colleges might become unique as successes. At the sametime ,we must escape framing a context in which higher education is portrayed as basically performing well, needing merely structural tinkering plus lots more money.

Latin American higher education has managed to achieve major change over the years. Images of pure stagnation are false. Community colleges would represent another, not a sole, instance of major change. Much change has come through planned public policy reforms, including through national legislation. In recent years, several countries have launched national policy initiatives that move away from "statist" policies and instead open systems to more competition, differentiation, and other forces that are potentially friendly to community college development. Less appreciated is that much change has come outside such reforms and legislation. Indeed it has often come in spite of laws and national rules. Both routes to change— centrally planned and unplanned— are possible and should be contemplated for prospective community college development. A prime example of largely unplanned change to date is the stunning growth of private higher education, considered below. Another is the emergence and growth of new fields of study; stereotypes notwithstanding, the bulk of enrollments are no longer in law, medicine, and civil engineering but rather move increasingly to commercially oriented fields that no central authorities mandated through manpower planning.

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[4] The term two-year institution or community college is used in this paper as shorthand for the sort of short cycle higher education we contemplate for Latin America, even where it is a bit longer or shorter than two years and not specifically labeled community college in a given country.

[5] For more extended analysis of both performance and differentiation, see Claudio de Moura Castro and Daniel C. Levy, *Myth, Reality, and Reform: Higher Education Policy in Latin America (Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, distribution by Johns Hopkins University Press,* 2000.

Such unplanned changes probably help explain another significant accomplishment of Latin American higher education that defies negative stereotypes: graduates, far from commonly languishing in unemployment or in menial jobs, do significantly better than their less-educated peers. Individual rates of return remain high.[6] Admittedly sketchier data suggest that social rates of return are also positive.

Many additional social and political claims conventionally made by public university representatives have considerable validity. Higher education has been a major vehicle for social mobility for many. It has often been a venue for social interaction and national integration. And it has often been a venue for political participation that has at least sometimes been quite positive for freedom and democracy. Universities have been centers for the development of thought and intellectual and cultural life. Some of these functions would not be primary ones for community colleges.

Negative views of Latin American higher education thus frequently amount to perceptions that ignore or downplay such positive accomplishments and instead compare actual performance to idealized expectations. Idealized expectations include miraculous impacts higher education would have on economic development or social progress. They include catching up to higher education levels in the First World. And they include the quite wrongheaded notion that virtually all higher education should be of a research university kind. When these expectations are unfulfilled many formulate negative evaluations.

Of course, there are in reality overwhelming problems. For our purposes, it is useful to highlight their relationship to inadequate differentiation, or inadequate treatment of differentiation. Before so doing we simply list several salient and rather general problems with Latin American higher education:

- Average educational quality is low.
- Teaching and learning too often remain locked in static pedagogical practices, with dry lecturing and passive note-taking rather than interactive participation.
- Enrollments and institutional proliferation have greatly exceeded the financial and human resource (student and teacher) bases to sustain them well.
- Inefficiencies are rampant. So are inequities. So are political conflicts, which often block warranted academic change. A lack of sound incentives is accompanied by perverse incentives.
- Naturally, then, higher education faces a crisis of legitimacy as much public opinion and leadership has developed a negative view of its performance.
- On the other hand, some of higher education's failings result from or have been exacerbated by forces outside its own control; economic crises and political repression are the most blatant examples, but it is important to recognize that social demands and democratically developed political rules also often have hurt higher education performance.

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[6] Drawing on the experience of U.S. community colleges, we might expect that Latin American community colleges would help get their students gain income than they would otherwise get, though on the average less than counterparts in universities get.

## DIFFERENTIATION

### Formidable Differentiation

Latin America has managed to achieve a degree of both institutional and functional differentiation in higher education. Some has come through central planning, some quite outside it.

The public sector has seen the mix of planned and unplanned forces. We highlight the planned forces operating there but much proliferation in institutions and fields of study has come as a response to unplanned, largely undirected, explosive demand from students entering public higher education.

Several countries have undertaken broad policy reform to create alternative public universities to perform somewhat different functions, or to perform traditional functions differently, from what was and remains common in most national universities. In Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico, for example, new public universities were granted either more or less autonomy from the State. They were encouraged to launch new fields of study, make more connections with the job market, operate with private as well as public money, build departments linking teaching and research, improve efficiency, and tie incentives to performance. Additionally, most countries have created a variety of governmental or other public research centers.

Especially relevant to consideration of establishing community colleges is that most countries have also created a network of public as well as private institutions that are devoted mostly to teaching and training but are not "universities." Data from the Latin American regional office of UNESCO for the mid-1990s show some 4626 "non-universities" alongside 812 universities.[7] These institutions still trail the universities 2:1 in total enrollments, reflecting their typically smaller size. Roughly one-fifth of the higher education institutions are labeled "technological and other institutions" as opposed to universities, polytechnic institutions, or teacher training institutions.

Private institutions out-number public ones in each of these institutional categories. Although the private sector hardly existed before the 1930s it is now formidable. As of 1930, only Chile, Colombia, and Peru had private higher education and this accounted for but a few percent of total regional enrollments. By 1955, the figure was 14 percent and then grew rather steadily to about one-third of enrollments by the mid-1970s and eventually to about 40 percent— with every country except Cuba represented. A recent surge has given the private sector more than a fourth even of graduate enrollments (where the sector had been sparse), especially in job-oriented "specialization" and masters as opposed to more academically oriented doctoral courses. Such figures are significant. For one thing, as they make Latin America perhaps the world's leading region in private percentage of first-degree enrollments (beyond the roughly 22 percent undergraduate figure for the US), it truly represents the force of change outside central planning. For another, the vibrancy of private growth is especially

[7] The Peruvian case shows a rapid rise of mostly open access non-university higher education in the 1970s and 1980s, amounting however to just 3% of total higher education by 1991. Meanwhile, general studies programs continue to be seen as mostly just an "additional filter" rather than as programs for job preparation. (Patricia McLauchlan de Arregui, "La situación de las universidades peruanas," Notas para el debate 12, 1994: 62-63, 79).

relevant for the prospects of community college development since such development is unlikely to come through the traditionally subsidized public sector.[8]

Moreover, Latin American higher education's private growth represents a real differentiation because it is usually very different from the public sector in many key respects. One is financial source. Most public institutions have relied overwhelmingly on State subsidies. Almostall private institutions depend almost fully on private income; for many, tuition and fees approach 100 percent. Private institutions rarely receive annual public subsidies, though some countries like Brazil allow for privates and their personnel to compete for merit-based discretionary funding from the State. Another difference is that the private governance profile typically involves tight control by owners, boards, and their rectors— meaning strong administration— rather than great leeway for pressure by student or professor or worker organizations. Additionally, functions are often different regarding matters like tighter ties to the job market. In each of these respects, the typical private institution arguably is closer than the typical public one to proposals under consideration here for what community colleges might look like in Latin America.[9]

Inadequate Differentiation

There is, however, less differentiation within Latin American higher education than may immediately meet the eye. Thousands of institutions do not mean thousands of distinct ones, certainly not totally distinct functions from one place to the next. Nor should such hyper-differentiation be sought. On the other hand, the present differentiation is less than what is often needed and less even than what is rightly pursued (i.e., too ineffectively pursued).

Formalism is rampant. That is, structures created to serve and often claiming to serve distinct functions fail to do so, whatever their outward trappings. For example, "departments" often fail to link teaching and research in work built around disciplines, instead replicating or being controlled by professional faculties; their "full-time" professors do not work full-time on their university jobs.

The most proximate examples of formalism for our purposes concern the failures of technical institutions of higher education to achieve adequate differentiation from non-technical universities. They often seek the university nomenclature to gain prestige, thus "improving" their clientele, and to secure the privileges available in public subsidies or jobs reserved for universities. Similarly in pursuit of status and rewards, they often emulate programs common and appropriate for training in the classic professions, notably engineering. For technical pursuits, this translates into too much theory (or pretense at theory), too little practice.

It is important not to exaggerate and thereby contradict our earlier assertion that considerable functional differentiation has developed. New institutions often offer something distinctive even while they are

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[8] In the U.S. there is a heavy association of "community colleges" with the public sector of higher education, "junior colleges" with the private sector. Early on, junior colleges were prominent but massification made community colleges, public, the overwhelming two-year sub-sector.

[9] Daniel C. Levy, Higher Education and the State in Latin America: Private Challenges to Public Dominance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1986). The private sector also contributes greatly to differentiation because it is so internally variegated, as great differences exist across institutions; it is unclear how much community college development would replicate this feature.

not distinctive in other ways. In the case of technical higher education, institutions like Chile's State Technical University (now the University of Santiago) or Argentina's National Technological University have been different from mainstream universities in matters like the concentration of their curriculum offerings. But it is also important, in sketching the context for consideration of community college development, that we understand not only that functional differentiation does sometimes flourish but also why and how it sometimes turns out to be injuriously limited.

Causes and Consequences of Inadequate Differentiation

In overly general terms, two causes of inadequate functional differentiation can be identified. They form two sides of the phenomenon of *isomorphism*, the process by which organizations come to be like one another.

Coercive isomorphism occurs where powerful actors, usually the State but in our case also the traditional public universities, impose rules that limit differentiation. Some combination of self-interest and genuine belief in the "best way" to do things is usually at play. Powerful in Latin America is the European ideal (quite antithetical to the U.S. model of higher education) that there is basically one norm in higher education and it involves the University, with all accompanying characteristics of academic quality and discovery. Reality in Latin America is light years separated from this myth, but that does not undo the ideal of standardization "at the highest level." Thus, national legislation, funding policies, and accreditation systems either prescribe matters like administrative structure, admissions and staffing policy, degree requirements, curriculum— or they reward only the standard way of doing things, thus acting as disincentives for differentiation.

Consistent with care not to exaggerate, we emphasize that pressures and normative belief in such isomorphic rules often outstrip the reality of them in Latin American higher education. Rules are often ignored or circumvented, as on matters like curricular requirements.

The other side of isomorphism is non-coercive. Many actors and institutions copy voluntarily. They lack the ideas, information, incentives, resources, markets, or courage to launch out in distinctive directions. This observation holds in many respects for most private institutions and technical institutions. And, like coercively restrictive national rules, tendencies of non-coercive copying are crucial in considering obstacles to community college development.

Although not all emulation is bad and not all differentiation is good, the evidence strongly suggests that the region suffers greatly from inadequate differentiation of a desirable kind. Latin America creates too little differentiation and it fails to give proper nourishment to the differentiation that is created, thus causing or allowing it to slip.

We can identify four major functions in Latin American higher education and all four are injured by the inadequate differentiation--by inadequate support, pursuit, and treatment of differentiation.[10] Technical higher education, like general higher education, suffers on all counts. Professional and academic leadership functions, on the other hand, are supported and pursued, even prized; they suffer largely because they are too generally pursued, whereas they can be properly nourished only as relatively small parts of the enrollment and institutional panoply. In turn, establishment and stubborn insistence on rules

[10] Castro and Levy 2000: 37-100.

and structures suited for only these two functions proves very injurious to development of technical and general higher education. Both are often forced to try to act like or pretend to be something other than what they could potentially do well. [11]

## TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS TO DATE

To this point we have spoken generally of differentiation, with some emphasis on technical higher education. Now we add in more of the picture about two-year institutions per se.

This is difficult to do, however, for data are sparse and problematic. It is unclear what part of the data on technical institutions refers to two-year institutions. It is likewise unclear how much two-year study is subsumed within institutions that mostly are known for courses of five or so years.

Then too, much of the subsumed two-year work is only partly relevant to our deliberations on community college development. It is set up to be a kind of general studies, or common trunk or coursework, that leads into professional study in the same institution, not directly to the job market. And there are many other data problems. [12] Venezuela, for example, has had extended experience with institutions dedicated to short study, whereas Brazil has lacked a formal two-year sector (but has also lately shown increased flexibility). In other cases too, it should be possible to gather numbers along with commentary to identify what is what.

More could likewise be done to gather information on historical as well as contemporary two-year efforts in Latin America. AID and the creation in 1976 of the Consortium of U.C. Community Colleges for International Development have directly influenced some Latin American countries. A particularly interesting episode of collaboration between domestic and external reformers was the creation of two-year regional colleges within the University of Chile in the 1960s. AID and the IDB were among the backers. The University of California model inspired the attempt. A difference was that the California model provided for a separate two-year system whereas Chile created branches of the national university. [13] This led to myriad tensions, including coercive isomorphism from a central campus wedded to notions of what was appropriate higher education, rules, standards, and control; meanwhile, the regional institutions and their clientele felt pressures for "academic drift" upward to be like prestigious universities. Eventually, the two-year institutions changed name and then were turned into freestanding regional universities. However, for some time several succeeded in developing curriculum suited to regional needs and attracting a regional clientele, including of more modest socioeconomic

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[11] An indicative list of common rules that cripple technical higher education includes those on: full-time staff, variety of disciplines in the curriculum, duration of study, and bureaucratic procedures to gain approval for new studies, however urgent the signals from the job market may be for the creation of new studies.

[12] Some freestanding institutions with two-year studies are called colleges, a common term around the world where the institutions are private. Since many other institutions were pushed up from the secondary level, there are definitional issues about what is higher or post-secondary; as different countries use different definitions, aggregate regional data would be problematic even where they could be assembled. Existing data on fields of study by institution are obscure not only because of confusion over which institutional type is which but also because there is an over-aggregation of fields; the main problem for our interests is that UNESCO and other data typically group physical science, engineering, architecture, and technology (which together may account for a fifth of the region's enrollments) whereas only some part of this would conform to two-year study. Meanwhile, some pertinent two-year study may lie outside these fields.

[13] The branch idea was perhaps more similar to the pattern in the U.S. state of Wisconsin.

status than was typical for the main campus. Another benefit, also valuable to keep in mind as a rationale for community college development today in Latin America is that the two-year institutions in essence aided the universities: they helped protect Chilean universities from the proliferation, massification, and decline seen in sister republics.

In the 1970s and 1980s, with IDB support, Costa Rican universities created two-year campuses. Again the forces that have often stifled adequate differentiation in Latin American higher education took their toll. Moreover, Costa Rica's simultaneous creation of new universities amounted to an exaggerated estimate of the enrollment and resources available for the higher education system overall, and the two-year places were squeezed. However, they too provided some evidence that two-year institutions could play a worthwhile role in their regions.

But the main one and two-year reform efforts of the 1960s and later, both by donors and their domestic partners, did not concern either freestanding or branch institutions. Instead, they concerned general studies within the universities. Usually, the idea was to break with the rigid professional model and to inject a kind of general education, even a broad avenue into the university as a whole rather than into more narrow professional faculties. Their histories are strewn with disappointments, again demonstrating the forces that cripple true differentiation. Faculties have shaped the programs to their interests and beliefs and norms. Students have continued to want the professional training and degree. To be sure, some programs have made laudable progress, including recently. The expansion of such short study programs could respond to some of the rationales for community college development, but not others.

Finally, a look at the experience to date of Colombia and Mexico illustrates both the slow progress to date and the hope for accelerated progress.

Colombia has gone quite far in diversification, much of it planned with formal sectors. Thus, alongside universities are both technical professional institutions, mostly with two-year programs, and technological universities, mostly with three-year programs. One problem is that the universities continue to account for 82.1 percent of the total enrollment, with a mere 4.8 percent for the technical professional institutions as well as 13.0 percent for the technological universities. A second problem is illustrated by the fact that most students aspire to "move up" to the "next level." Similarly, technical professional institutions seek to become technological institutions and technological institutions seek to become universities. This is classic academic drift. On the other hand, an innovative proposal (INNOVAR, Instituto Innovación Regional, of the Mission of Science, Education, and Development) provides for a pilot program in the small town of Purificación, Tolima. A key idea is to identify attractive businesses and offer studies to take advantage of their opportunities, stressing modern technology and reaching to and beyond local markets.[14]

Mexico has also gone far in non-university higher education, but its technical regional institutes, industrial and agricultural, have not been two-year institutes. There has also been a tendency to academic drift, though some important differences from universities are upheld. Since the early 1990s, however, expansion of two-year higher education has been notable. As of 1992, there were only 428

[14] For the observations on Colombia, the author particularly thanks Eduardo Aldana, personal communication, August 8, 2000. For the data the author thanks Galo Burbano López of the ASCUN; the data are for the second half of 1997 and a total (*pregrado)* enrollment of 740,812.

students in only three 'technological universities." By 1998 there were 11,714 students in over twenty such institutions, growing then to more than 29,000 by 2000, with projections for 37,750 a year hence. Moderately higher figures emerge if we add in the two-year programs in higher education institutions that predominantly have longer programs.[15] Still, all this growth comes to only roughly two percent of total higher education enrollments.

The model for Mexico's technological universities is the U.S. community college, although the *gringo* roots are disguised somewhat, as with reference to French short higher education. The idea is to diversify institutionally and give quick job access, contributing to local development. The institutions are public, decentralized organizations linked to state government, through accords with the national government. The degree given is Técnico Superior Universitario (equivalent to "level 5" of UNESCO's classification), and there is an option for access to regular university programs. 1999 data suggest cost savings as the oldest technological university had an average cost of between 15,000 and 17,000 pesos/student versus the higher education average of 27,000. Some 68 percent of enrollments are in fields of engineering and technical studies, 32 percent in administrative and social sciences, with just a fraction of a percent in agricultural studies.

## TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Most of the factors that have undermined the development of a functionally differentiated two-year institutional sector in the past persist, as do the more general obstacles to functional differentiation in Latin American higher education. Norms and interests associated with a dominant university model remain strong. National rules remain hurdles, sometimes heightened by evolving accreditation systems.[16] Such problems need to be addressed in order for community colleges to develop and to develop well.

And while Latin America lacks many of the market conditions and higher education policies supportive of U.S. community college development, so it has lacked some key ingredients of Europe's development of two-year institutions (though many of these institutions have suffered also from forces that make them more like universities). A major problem has been the institutional weakness of Latin American as compared to European States.

*But a sober appreciation of the basic trends in Latin American higher education policy today shows that they are largely conducive to the development of community colleges— at least much more so than before.*

1. The environment is conducive. At the broadest level, internationalization is rampant in contemporary higher education, and Latin America has especially opened up to U.S. models and

[15] Of over 30, 000 students for 1999, there were over 20, 000 in technological universities, nearly 3000 in private institutions, over 5000 in state universities, roughly 3500 in military schools, and 9 in federal universities. An associate professional program of two-years gives its own title. Data on years simplified so that, for example, academic year 1991-92 is taken here as 1992. Data from Mexico's Subsecretariat of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

[16] Meanwhile, other policies, not specifically targeted against differentiation, have pernicious effects. For example, easy access, heavily subsidized, at public institutions of longer duration limits individuals' incentives to pay for a less prestigious, shorter cycle.

influences. The internationalizing influences in contemporary higher education worldwide are in fact strongly U.S. influences. Whereas identification with things U.S. was usually a political net negative, now it is usually a political net positive. Major political-economic changes, often loosely classified as neoliberal, are mostly supportive of community college development. Included among these changes is the growing participation of business in concert with government for purposes of economic and social development.

2. The changing political-economic environment goeshand-in-hand with changes in higher education policy and structure. More accurately put, the changing environment promotes those changes, which often lag but are nonetheless noteworthy. Most general is a shift from ideas of "State control" and "Continental" or classic university models for whole systems towards ideas of "State supervision" or pluralism in which differentiation is fundamental— and is encouraged by policy. A key point potentially for community college development from these political economic and higher education trends is that the State limits its subsidy commitments across the board for higher education while nonetheless seeking ways to broaden access and improve efficiency and impact. The State seeks to target its funds to promote those ends. Some version of U.S. practices of portable direct student aid from the State could help attract students who would not otherwise consider community colleges— and if these colleges were rewarded through some sort of enrollment-based funding system, they might offer more and better programs.

3. Meanwhile, parallel forces come from "below." The social demand for higher education continues to grow at a time that State readiness to finance public universities decreases. Newer groups are less wedded to traditional higher education. Most students work while they go to higher education. The average age is higher than the classic higher education age. And a salient drive is for education that works in the marketplace. Reflected even in field trends within universities, this move toward commercial and applied fields is promising for community college development. So are tendencies to seek out alternative, practical, diploma and specialization programs— and to pursue aspects of lifelong education. Evidence from Brazil and northern Mexico suggests the power of the new demand for the kind of postsecondary education community colleges can offer.

But if all these conditions are ripe, why has there not already been a surge of community colleges? We can answer with only informed speculation. The major reason would be persistence of most of the basic obstacles cited above to functional differentiation in general, along with those regarding differentiation in the form of two-year institutions. Present change tendencies in the higher education environment, policy, and demand work against many of the obstacles but they do not in a short time obliterate them.

Another reason two-year study has not flourished yet appears to be that alternative forms of expansion of low-cost higher education in practical fields flourish. These include some public education, where students pay only nominal amounts. On the private education side they include places that charge a good deal for their low-quality offerings yet the demand is so powerful that they do well. What remains unclear, then, in countries like Colombia, is why other entrepreneurs, civic-minded or not, fail to mount a challenge based on more decent education (or similar education with lower charges).

As Claudio de Moura Castro points out, an additional reason for the lack of commercially oriented community colleges to date likely concerns "start-up" problems. There is a scarcity of ideas and know-how. There is also a scarcity of ready capital for the initial costs of texts, supplies, buildings, and

personnel. On the other hand, this too is changing. The world over, including the U.S., shows increasing examples of eagerness to make profit as well as progress in education at all levels. Several Latin American private universities have shown extraordinary entrepreneurial zeal and skill in expanding their markets, and some of these institutions may be ready to invest in community college development.

Of course, the idea of start-up problems, or bottlenecks that require a sudden extraordinary force to crack, fits a fundamental rationale for State loans or external assistance. Enter a fresh role for the State, consistent with broader tendencies in revamping the State. Enter the IDB; enter the AID and the associations of American and Canadian community colleges.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has suggested that the development of community colleges could indeed be worthwhile. It has also indicated how such development would fit logically with powerful contemporary pushes to reform higher education and its relationship with its environment. The paper has pointed to ways that community college development would represent an extension of much that has been positive about change and differentiation in Latin American higher education. Particular matters include expanded access, social mobility, private financial contributions, flexible State financing in collaboration with non-state financing, efficiency through decreased unit costs and increased useful content and sound governance, and links to job markets.

On the other hand, the paper has also argued that much that has been troublesome about Latin American higher education relates to inadequate differentiation. A similar list of particulars concerning matters like access, efficiency, and performance could be put forth here then as rationales for community college development. Although some existing institutions are managing serious change on these particulars, the recent history of Latin American higher education supports the view that certain important changes in systems come more easily through the creation of new organizations than through confrontational reform within existing organizations.

Additionally, the development of community colleges could allow other higher education institutions to concentrate on, get more money for, and perform better at tasks for which they have comparative advantages. These tasks include research, sophisticated professional training, general education, or indeed any task largely outside the community college purview. All this amounts once again to a conclusion that the development of community colleges can help Latin American higher education achieve a more adequate level of functional differentiation.